

## Equality Impact Assessment

### Action Plan

This section is completed at the end of the Equality Impact Assessment. Due to the importance of embedding equality in SQA through our actions the Action Plan will be the focus and record of ongoing actions.

<b>Agreed Schedule Review Date</b>	<b>April 2027</b>	<b>Additional Schedule Review Date</b>	<b>N/A</b>
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Explain how you will monitor and record the actual impact on equality groups, including how the evidence can be revisited to measure the actual impact.

<b>Required Actions</b>	<b>Owner</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Comment &amp; Review</b>
Continue to review and assess SQA's engagement People survey	OD Manager	Commencing quarterly from Summer 2024	New pulse surveys are planned to commence in 2024/2025 replacing the previous annual People Survey
Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's equality mainstreaming report [next report due May 2025]	People Reward and Equalities Manager	Continuing	
Continue to review and assess every 2 years SQA's workforce equality monitoring report [next report due May 2025]	People Reward and Equalities Manager	Continuing	

Designated Home-based Post Policy V1.2

Identified Actions	General Equality Duty	Owner	Date	Comment & Review
<b>General</b> We advise a review of SQA's <a href="#">Lone workers risk assessment</a>	Foster good relations	Head of Appointee Management (Facilities team)	September 24	

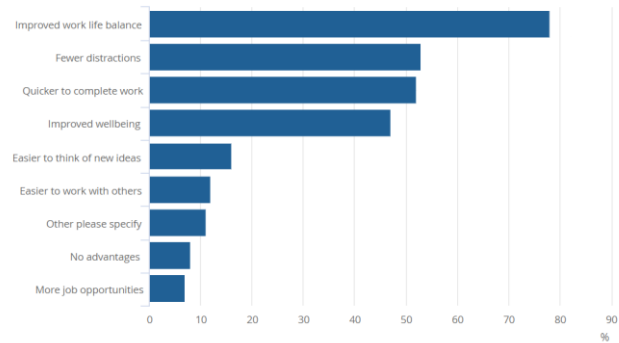
## Policy Aims

<b>Name of Policy or practice</b>	Designated Home-based Post Policy
<b>New Policy or Revision</b>	New (replaces Home Based Workers policy)
<b>Name of Policy Owner</b>	Head of Human Resources
<b>Date Policy Owner Confirmed Completion</b>	5 April 2024

<b>What is the rationale for this policy or practice?</b>
<p>This policy has been developed to ensure effective management of designated home-based posts and implications for you as a post holder, clarifying your responsibilities and the various SQA business areas involved in establishing and supporting the working arrangements.</p> <p>This policy solely relates to staff who have a contract, or an amendment to a contract, which states, because of their post, their working location will be designated as home-based.</p>
<b>What evidence is there to support the implementation or development of this policy or practice?</b>
<p>SQA designates certain posts as home based for business and operational reasons. SQA currently has 74 designated home based posts.</p> <p>SQA have defined that home-based posts must meet business and job role requirements (Policy section 3).</p> <p>SQA have to ensure they provide a safe working environment for those employees in home-based posts as defined in <a href="#">Home working - HSE</a>.</p> <p>SQA's people survey 2022 highlighted that 75% staff agreed there was evidence that Health &amp; Safety was taken seriously and 89% were happy with their working environment. This policy can enhance this generally positive perception further by making processes and decision making factors clearly understood and consistently applied.</p>

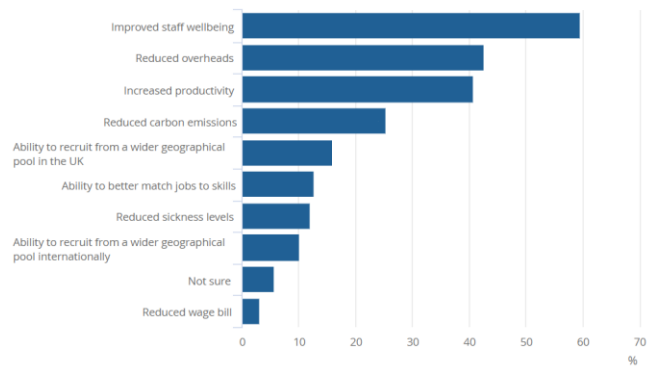
## Designated Home-based Post Policy V1.2

**Percentage of homeworkers reporting advantages, Great Britain, 3 - 13  
February 2022**



**Improved staff well-being was the most common reason for  
businesses using, or planning to use, homeworking permanently**

**Reasons for adopting homeworking as a permanent business model,  
businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by count, UK, 4 to 17  
April 2022**



Other benefits for having this policy are outlined here [Work From Home Policy UK | Croner.](#)

### What are the aims of this policy or practice?

- This policy has been developed to ensure effective management of designated home-based posts and implications for post holders, clarifying responsibilities and the various SQA business areas involved in establishing and supporting working arrangements.
- Posts may only be designated by SQA as permanently home based to meet business reasons. There is no option for staff to request home based working in this policy. Staff requests for home working arrangements should follow Flexible Working policy or Hybrid working guidance.
- This policy solely relates to staff who have a contract, or an amendment to a contract, which states, because of their post, their working location will be designated as home-based.
- The policy outlines the responsibilities of individuals or business areas which are involved in establishing and supporting home-based working arrangements.

The framework for standards has been enhanced including several new additions including; designation of work location, attending premises, training and development, wellbeing, right to disconnect, confidentiality, Insurance, agreements and covenants & Equalities.

### How is the content of these aims relevant to equality groups?

We considered potential disadvantages to equality groups and found that there are indications highlighted here <https://www.linkedin.com/business/marketing/blog/brand/attracting-and-keeping-talent-as-hybrid-working-becomes-the-norm> that remote working can mean up to 32% more likely to struggle with work life balance, highlighted a general need to ensure some form of person to person connection/interaction is essential to consider in day to day work activities. 'Feeling [disconnected from coworkers and leadership](#) was among the biggest complaints of the early remote working days. One of the best ways to keep employees engaged is to offer clear channels for communication and regular opportunities to check in – both professionally and socially'.

We also considered potential negative impacts around the perception that you need to be seen in the office in order to progress (although there is no evidence to show that this is a significant issue at SQA), this is a perception that anecdotally exists generally within workplaces. We looked at information like this [Presenteeism: 80% of UK employees work when sick – Work in Mind](#).

We also considered whether working remotely could potentially negatively affect anyone as the increased costs of heating/lighting, electricity demands, broadband, also desk/table or having sufficient working space, could cause increased demand on personal finances, particularly impacting on those on low incomes. There are provisions in place to mitigate this through the payment of an allowance and staff can also apply for a tax refund through HMRC. SQA provides access to many discounted products and services as well as a financial and debt management advice service through the Employee Assistance Programme Benefits.

## Designated Home-based Post Policy V1.2

There are evidenced issues potentially affecting any equality group caused by loneliness, insecurity and social anxiety from lone working [Lone working - HSE](#) and [Impacts of Lone Working on Mental Health - Diverse Minds](#). While general mental wellbeing is referenced throughout the policy (and specifically in 5.10.3) there is no specific mention of the type of safety and mental wellbeing risks arising from sustained periods of lone working,

Home-based post definition is clearly referenced in the policy as those posts that have been designated home-based by SQA for business reasons.

We concluded that decisions on defining roles that are home based (referenced throughout section 3 of the policy) are based solely on business related reasons (job type, location, budget availability, resources) therefore there is no apparent consideration relating to any specific equality group.

## Evidence, Consultation and Engagement

### What stakeholders have you engaged with in the development of this policy or practice?

As this is an internal policy, SQA has asked for feedback from internal employee network groups in relation to equality impacts groups. These employee network groups include:

- ACE (Appreciate Culture and Ethnicity) Network.
- SQA Disability Network.
- SQA Rainbow Network.
- Women's Network.

#### **Evidence of Stakeholder Engagement:**

**Evidence of all meeting minutes, actions and consultation undertaken with the PRG group** (including Equality considerations in respect of all policies, activities and functions) is detailed on a dedicated SQA shared resources site.

### What evidence about equality groups do you have to support this assessment?

## Designated Home-based Post Policy V1.2

Age

Table 1.1: Age

Age bracket	2019 no	2019 %	2020 no	2020 %	2021 no	2021 %	2022 no	2022 %	Variance no	Variance %
16–24	59	6.32%	50	5.27%	49	4.93%	36	3.47%	-23	-2.85%
25–29	65	6.97%	60	6.32%	73	7.35%	105	10.14%	40	3.17%
30–34	123	13.18%	109	11.49%	96	9.67%	95	9.17%	-28	-4.01%
35–39	131	14.04%	145	15.28%	146	14.70%	144	13.90%	13	-0.14%
40–44	129	13.83%	135	14.23%	146	14.70%	150	14.48%	21	0.65%
45–49	116	12.43%	105	11.06%	113	11.38%	124	11.97%	8	-0.46%
50–54	125	13.40%	141	14.86%	131	13.19%	126	12.16%	1	-1.24%
55–59	119	12.75%	117	12.33%	122	12.29%	122	11.78%	3	-0.98%
60–64	53	5.68%	72	7.59%	81	8.16%	102	9.85%	49	4.16%
65+	13	1.39%	15	1.58%	36	3.63%	32	3.09%	19	1.70%
Total	933	100.00%	949	100.00%	993	100.00%	1036	100.00%	103	11.04%

Table 1.1 shows the age profile of the organisation from 2019 to 2022

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Disability

Table 3.1: Disability

Disability	2019 number	2019 %	2020 number	2020 %	2021 number	2021 %	2022 number	2022 %	Variance number	Variance %
No	417	44.69%	651	68.60%	683	68.78%	697	67.28%	280	22.59%
Not Specified	444	47.59%	152	16.02%	152	15.31%	184	17.76%	-260	-29.83%
Prefer not to say	21	2.25%	68	7.17%	76	7.65%	72	6.95%	51	4.70%
Yes	51	5.47%	78	8.22%	82	8.26%	83	8.01%	32	2.54%
Total	933	100.00%	949	100.00%	993	100.00%	1036	100.00%	103	0.00%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)



Table 3.1 shows the composition of the disability self-reporting categories for the period from 2019 to 2022.

Of those staff who have declared a disability, females made up 58.54% (2021) and 53.01% (2022) of the population, and males 41.46% (2021) and 46.99% (2022). Due to the low number of staff declaring a disability within SQA we are unable to publish further intersectional data in relation to disability and other protected characteristics.

## Race

**Table 7.1: Race**

Ethnicity	2019 number	2019%	2020 number	2020%	2021 number	2021%	2022 number	2022%
African, Scottish African or British African	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	<5	<0.48%
Asian, Scottish Asian or British Asian	13	1.39%	20	2.11%	24	2.42%	25	2.41%
Caribbean or Black	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Not specified	383	41.05%	123	12.96%	101	10.17%	122	11.78%
Other ethnic group	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Prefer not to say	10	1.07%	33	3.48%	34	3.42%	30	2.90%
White	523	56.06%	763	80.40%	825	83.08%	849	81.95%

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

Table 7.1 shows the ethnic minority background of staff within the organisation for the period from 2019 to 2022

Just under 3.50% staff declared they were from an ethnic minority background in both 2021 (3.32%) and 2022 (3.38%). However, it is encouraging to note that the percentage of staff declaring they are from an ethnic minority background has increased overall by 3.97% between 2019 and 2022. The percentage of staff within each ethnic minority category has remained relatively stable over the last three years.

# Designated Home-based Post Policy V1.2

## Religion or Belief

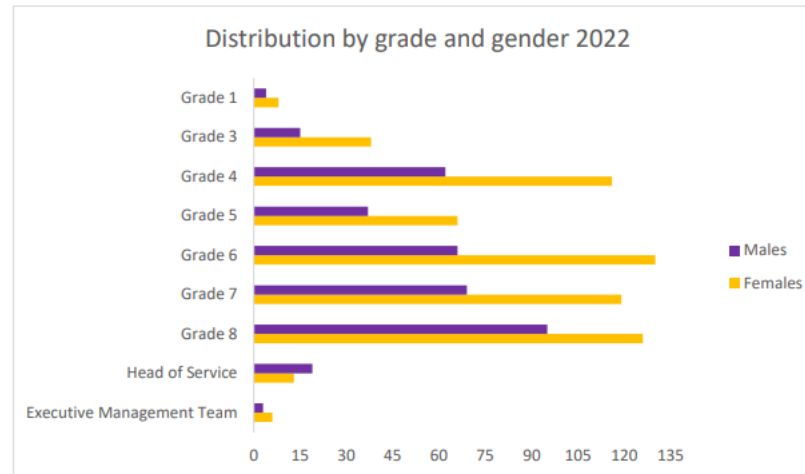
**Table 8.1: Religion or belief**

Religion or belief	2019 number	2019%	2020 number	2020%	2021 number	2021%	2022 number	2022%
Another religion or body	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	6	0.60%	6	0.58%
Buddhist	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Church of Scotland	91	9.75%	122	12.86%	127	12.79%	125	12.07%
Hindu	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	7	0.70%	8	0.77%
Jewish	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
Muslim	7	0.75%	11	1.16%	10	1.01%	11	1.06%
None	286	30.65%	421	44.36%	462	46.53%	489	47.20%
Not specified	405	43.41%	126	13.28%	102	10.27%	123	11.87%
Other Christian	26	2.79%	43	4.53%	44	4.43%	44	4.25%
Prefer not to say	35	3.75%	98	10.33%	103	10.37%	103	9.94%
Roman Catholic	76	8.15%	118	12.43%	129	12.99%	123	11.87%
Sikh	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%

Table 8.1 shows the religion, belief or non-belief status of staff within the organisation for the period from 2019 to 2022.

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

**Sex****Gender****Distribution by grade and gender of SQA grade 1 – EMT**

Source: SQA Summary of Equal Pay Audit 2023

[Scottish Qualifications Authority \(sqa.org.uk\)](https://www.sqa.org.uk/)

The majority of the 2.9 million lone-parent families in 2022 were headed by a lone mother (2.5 million, 84%)

Source: <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/families/bulletins/familiesandhouseholds/2022>

59% of unpaid carers are women (Census 2021). Women are more likely to become carers and to provide more hours of unpaid care than men. More women than men provide high intensity care at ages when they would expect to be in paid work (Petrillo and Bennett, 2022)

Source: Carers UK

There are 1.25 million sandwich carers in the UK. These are people caring for an older relative as well as bringing up a family. 68% (850,743) are women.

Source: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/our-impact/campaigning/care-in-crisis/breaking-point-report/>

Sexual Orientation	Table 10.1: Sexual orientation								
	Sexual Orientation	2019 number	2019%	2020 number	2020%	2021 number	2021%	2022 number	2022%
	Bisexual	9	0.96%	12	1.26%	15	1.51%	16	1.54%
	Gay man	13	1.39%	20	2.11%	21	2.11%	23	2.22%
	Gay woman / lesbian	9	0.96%	10	1.05%	12	1.21%	12	1.16%
	Heterosexual / straight	431	46.20%	670	70.60%	700	70.49%	702	67.76%
	In another way	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
	Not specified	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	156	15.71%	189	18.24%
	Not sure	26	2.79%	76	8.01%	< 5	< 0.50%	< 5	< 0.48%
	Prefer not to say	443	47.48%	158	16.65%	84	8.46%	88	8.49%
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Table 10.1 shows the composition of staff sexual orientation within the organisation for the period 2019 to 2022.									
Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23 <a href="#">Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23</a>									
Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)	Due to the low number of staff reporting as transgender or describing their gender identity ‘in another way’, we are unable to publish further data in relation to gender reassignment or gender identity. This data is, however, monitored internally.								

**Marriage/Civil Partnership****Table 5.1: Relationship status**

Relationship status	2019 number	2019 %	2020 number	2020 %	2021 number	2021 %	2022 number	2022 %
Civil Partnership	7	0.75%	7	0.74%	8	0.81%	9	0.87%
Co-habiting/in a relationship	80	8.57%	112	11.80%	122	12.29%	122	11.78%
Divorced/Dissolved Civil Partnership	14	1.50%	16	1.69%	17	1.71%	19	1.83%
Married	265	28.40%	370	38.99%	425	42.80%	416	40.15%
Married/Civil Partnership	8	0.86%	12	1.26%	14	1.41%	16	1.54%
Not Specified	407	43.62%	179	18.86%	102	10.27%	127	12.26%
Other	< 5	< 0.54%	< 5	< 0.53%	7	0.70%	9	0.87%
Prefer not to say	18	1.93%	49	5.16%	55	5.54%	59	5.69%
Separated	6	0.64%	12	1.26%	12	1.21%	13	1.25%
Single	122	13.08%	183	19.28%	224	22.56%	239	23.07%
Widowed/surviving partner from Civil Partnership	< 5	< 0.54%	6	0.63%	7	0.70%	7	0.68%

Table 5.1 shows the marriage and civil partnership status of staff within the organisation for the period from 2019 to 2022.

Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23

[Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23](#)

**Pregnancy / Maternity****Table 6.1: Pregnancy and maternity**

Pregnancy and maternity	2019 number	2019 %	2020 number	2020 %	2021 number	2021 %	2022 number	2022 %
Contract ended as planned					1	3.33%		0.00%
Due to return to work					0	0.00%	11	40.00%
Resigned					0	0.00%	1	4.00%
Returned to work	20	100.00%	10	100.00%	29	96.67%	14	56.00%
Total	20	100.00%	10	100.00%	30	100.00%	26	100.00%

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	<p>Table 6.1 details the number of staff who have taken maternity leave, whether they are still on maternity leave (due to return to work), have returned to work following maternity leave, resigned following maternity leave, or their fixed-term contract ended (contract ended as planned).</p> <p>Source: SQA Workforce Equality Monitoring Report 2021-23 <a href="#">Equalities: SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-23</a></p>
<b>Care experience (where relevant)</b>	SQA does not currently collect Care Experience data.

### **Impact and Opportunities for Action**

The impact that a policy or practice has on an equality group may be different and this requires to be recorded. The impact may not always be negative. Actions are taken to address any differential impact, and include actions to mitigate against any negative impact, to advance equality and to foster good relations between groups.

Each section contains questions for each equality group. These questions are here to support consideration; however, you can provide further detail. Focus initially on the equality groups that would be affected by this policy. If you do not consider that certain equality groups would be affected by this policy, you may leave these sections.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Age	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>Younger workers may be more likely to be living in shared accommodation or less likely to have suitable working space at home. This may result in a greater need to have the option to work at an office location. While we recognise that many older people are highly capable when it comes to using new technologies, some older employees may not be as comfortable. There are higher numbers of older workers with caring responsibilities and home-based working may help them achieve a better work/life balance with the need to travel to work removed.</p> <p>There may also be a negative impact if a younger worker is starting their career as there may be less opportunity to shadow and learn from others, however this may be mitigated by SQA's coaching and mentoring programme and SQA Young Talent Strategy.</p> <p>We have recorded a potentially negative impact on younger and older employees, but this can, we feel, be mitigated by the supports outlined within the policy, for example, the right to disconnect, wellbeing, IT support and communication.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable negative impact</b></p>
	<p>Advance equality of opportunity</p> <p>The designated home-based post policy applies to all SQA employees who are in designated home-based posts – irrespective of Age. This policy could help to advance equality of opportunity for employees who need to work from home on the grounds of their Age or age related disability or illness.</p> <p>Foster good relations</p>



## Designated Home-based Post Policy V1.2

<b>Age</b>	<p>Whilst working from home may help reduce any gaps between older and younger people because interactions are ['invisible'], it may also lead to more prejudice due to the lack of workplace interactions and friendships which can break down misconceptions. If an individual in a team works from home permanently, there is often less opportunity for workplace interactions with different age groups, risks of isolation by tech generation (typically younger) as they stick to their own networks and have little opportunity to socialise across SQA's workforce.</p> <p>We conclude that the policy should directly reference this risk and refer to the need to engage an individual or individuals within a team by ensuring there are team events, ideally by face-to-face interactions at appropriate periods of time during the working year.</p>
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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Disability	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>We conclude that home working may better support the needs of many disabled people. Currently 8.01% of SQA employees have declared themselves as having a disability. Conversely, with no workplace interactions disabled people are more likely to experience exacerbation of poor mental health due to loneliness and reduced mental wellbeing. SQA has recently launched information and guidance on reasonable adjustments to support disabled employees and their line managers. This guidance also outlines our responsibilities as an organisation under the Equality Act 2010.</p> <p>There may be a positive impact neurodivergent employees with certain conditions who may require certain adjustments to working environments or practices. There may also be positive impacts in terms of providing an environment that is the best match in terms of meeting both work requirements, and those that relate to the specific needs of each individual disability, e.g. reduce the impact of distractions typical in an open plan office.</p> <p>There are appropriate support mechanisms in place to ensure regular communication and meetings are planned and put in place to mitigate the risk of isolation.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable positive impact</b></p>
	<p><b>Advance equality of opportunity</b></p> <p>Overall, this policy, and the designated home-based posts within SQA should be considered as a supportive option for disabled people. However, there is an opportunity by using innovation and careful management practices to offer people with disabilities a sustainable and supportive way to work with SQA that accommodate their needs.</p>

	Foster good relations
<b>Disability</b>	<p>Whilst working from home may help reduce the gap between disabled and non-disabled people because interactions are ['invisible'], it may also lead to more prejudice due to the lack of workplace interactions and friendships which can break down misconceptions. It might be argued there is greater potential to grow your internal and external network by working online so may advance equality and foster good relations</p> <p>If working from home permanently there are less opportunities for workplace interactions against different groups, risks of isolation by tech generation (typically younger) as people may stick to their own networks and have little opportunity to socialise across SQA's workforce.</p> <p>The post holder is treated the same way as all other SQA colleagues including the cascade of corporate and business area information. Completion of My Reviews and access to the same development opportunities</p>

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Race	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>People from some ethnic groups are more likely to live in a house of multiple occupancy or overcrowded accommodation making home working much more difficult. This is particularly relevant where SQA state that a base at SQA premises is not appropriate for the post. <a href="https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/housing/housing-conditions/overcrowded-households/latest">https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/housing/housing-conditions/overcrowded-households/latest</a></p> <p>Permanently working from home may lead to greater isolation in communities, limited societal integration and a higher risk to this equality group of poor mental health however home working may not impact on the persons interaction in their local community.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable negative impact</b></p> <p>This potential negative impact can, in our view, be <b>mitigated</b> by the supports outlined in the policy alongside information on lone working.</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	There are appropriate support mechanisms in place to ensure regular communication and meetings are planned and put in place to mitigate the risk of isolation.
	Foster good relations
	The post holder is treated the same way as all other SQA colleagues including the cascade of corporate and business area information. Completion of My Reviews and access to the same development opportunities
Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty

<b>Religion or Belief</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>Risks of Discrimination</p> <p>We conclude there is no evidence to suggest this guidance document may adversely impact on people on the grounds of their Religion or Philosophical Beliefs.</p> <p>SQA's Appreciate Culture &amp; Ethnicity (ACE) Network highlights different religious festivals throughout the year. It is also SQA's policy to offer quiet areas for prayer or personal reflection and meal options to reflect particular diets. The percentage of employees declaring their religion, belief or non-belief increased by 31.54% between 2019-2022. SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-2023 <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/equalities-2023-workforce-monitoring.pdf">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/equalities-2023-workforce-monitoring.pdf</a></p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable positive impact</b></p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	Home-based posts could benefit anyone with religious and/or other beliefs, providing more flexible arrangements for praying or other religious or belief practices and practices.
	Foster good relations
	The policy has a neutral impact on the promotion of good relations between people of different religions / belief systems.
<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>

<b>Sex</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>SQAs workforce monitoring report 2021-23 shows there are 644 females in the organisation and 392 males.</p> <p>In one respect, women are more likely to be balancing part-time, caring and /or schooling and if working from home for sustained periods, and although this can improve work life balance, it can have a negative impact on wellbeing. Home working also potentially reduces the opportunities for networking and potentially career-progression. Home working and reduced interactions with others can increase the risk of domestic abuse for both genders with potentially more time spent indoors. The risk of domestic abuse is also increased by isolation and is significantly greater in females. Loneliness affects men and women and without workplace interactions, levels of loneliness can increase due to home working.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</b></p> <p><b>We mitigate</b> this by ensuring the post holder is treated the same way as all other SQA colleagues including the cascade of corporate and business area information. Completion of My Reviews and access to the same development opportunities</p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	A designated home-based post can be a positive to opening up opportunities for both existing and new employees.
	Foster good relations
	Working from home permanently may present less opportunities for workplace interactions against different groups of people which would not assist in fostering good relations for employees of both sexes however, there would be an increased opportunity for internal and external online interactions.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Sexual Orientation	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>We are aware that individuals with this characteristic may not want to disclose their sexuality at work to others or 'out themselves'. We are also aware that there is a higher proportion of LGBTQ+ individuals that are affected by poor mental health and may subsequently need time for counselling etc.</p> <p>There is evidence to suggest that there are higher rates of mental ill health amongst the LGBT+ population in comparison to the heterosexual population. This is often due to experiences LGBTQ+ people go through that can affect their mental health, such as discrimination, homophobia or transphobia, social isolation, rejection, and difficult experiences of coming out.</p> <p><a href="https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_health.pdf">https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_health.pdf</a></p> <p>CIPD 2021 states that 16% of LGB+ workers feel unsafe in the workplace compared to their heterosexual workers (10%), whilst trans is even higher at 18%. <a href="https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/inclusion-perspectives-lgbt/">https://www.cipd.org/uk/knowledge/reports/inclusion-perspectives-lgbt/</a></p> <p>We have reviewed evidenced that people in this equality group are more likely to have existing mental health issues and therefore continued home working can further impact mental health with longer periods of social isolation and no in-person contact with colleagues. Long periods at home can mean greater abuse from unsupportive families or partners, contributing to increased stress or distress, and increased risk of abuse.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable negative impact</b></p> <p><b>We mitigate</b> this by ensuring the post holder is treated the same way as all other SQA colleagues including the cascade of corporate and business area information. Completion of My Reviews and access to the same development opportunities. Attending f2f meetings and events.</p>

	Advance equality of opportunity
	Unfortunately, there is still prejudice and discrimination in relation to sexual orientation and employees whose role is home based may feel psychologically safer than in the wider community and having to commute to the office.
	Foster good relations
	Designated home-based roles present less opportunities for in-person workplace interactions against different groups of people which would not assist in fostering good relations for employees generally. Home working may however offer more flexibility to give employees the opportunity to access support needed. <a href="#">Employee Assistance Programme</a>
<b>Protected Characteristic</b>	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Gender Re-assignment (Gender identity and transgender)</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>There are evidenced increased levels of mental health problems for this equality group.</p> <p>If a trans employee has been diagnosed with a condition such as gender dysphoria, then they may also be protected by the disability discrimination provisions of the Equality Act, as long as the other criteria for a disability have been met.</p> <p><a href="#">Research</a> indicates trans and non-binary adults are more likely than the general population to experience long-term health conditions, including mental health problems, dementia and learning disabilities, and to be autistic.</p> <p>There is evidence to suggest that there are higher rates of mental ill health amongst the trans population in comparison to the general population. This is often due to some things trans people go through that can affect their mental health, such as discrimination, transphobia, social isolation, rejection, and difficult experiences of coming out.</p> <p><a href="https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_health.pdf">https://www.stonewall.org.uk/system/files/lgbt_in_britain_health.pdf</a></p>



## Designated Home-based Post Policy V1.2

	<p>The workplace is one of the most likely locations for discrimination and harassment to occur, although it is important to note there is no evidence of that specific risk in SQA. Generally, working from home could reduce this.</p> <p>A comfortable and supportive home environment can also provide more privacy and security. We recognise that for some individuals home may not be a safe place and therefore health, safety and wellbeing being need to be considered.</p> <p>We consider that the SQA designated home-based post policy alongside other SQA policies such as flexible working, gender identity and transitioning at work will, on balance, have a positive impact on any employee identifying as Transgender. SQA also outlined support in the SQA Transitioning at Work policy.</p> <p>A positive impact is recorded for this equality group with noted potential negative impacts resulting in advised action to mitigate domestic and social isolation by specifically detailing the need to have team events and appropriate meaningful face to face interaction where possible.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable positive impact</b></p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	<p>Home working could enable a more inclusive environment where all colleagues are treated equally with no labels. A positive impact is recorded for this equality group.</p>
	Foster good relations
	<p>Home working can enable a more inclusive environment where all colleagues are treated equally with no labels. As previously stated, working from home permanently may present less opportunities for in-person workplace interactions against different groups of people which would not assist in fostering good relations for employees generally. Home working may offer more time away from the workplace (and subsequently more specialist support) for colleagues transitioning gender.</p>

Designated Home-based Post Policy V1.2

	<p>A <b>positive impact</b> is recorded for this equality group with noted potential negative impacts resulting in advised action to mitigate domestic and social isolation by specifically detailing the need to have team events and appropriate meaningful face to face interaction where possible.</p>
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Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Marriage/Civil Partnership	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>Risks of Discrimination</p> <p>Within SQA the percentage of staff declaring they are married or in a civil partnership fell from 46.22% in 2021 to 43.82% in 2022.</p> <p>We conclude there is no reasonable evidence to suggest this policy could adversely affect employees on the grounds of this 'Protected characteristic'.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</b></p>
	Advance equality of opportunity
	No identified impact.
	Foster good relations
	As previously stated, working from home permanently may present less opportunities for in-person workplace interactions against different groups of people which would not assist in fostering good relations for employees generally however may potentially increase online internal and external interactions.

Protected Characteristic	General Equality Duty
Pregnancy / Maternity	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p><b>Risks of Discrimination:</b></p> <p>There are potential negative impacts for all employees working in home-based roles, but particularly with pregnant employees, in terms of blurring of lines between work and home life and the difficulty in undertaking some roles in the home (e.g. sensitive conversations in the presence of children when working at home).</p> <p>Physical mobility during the final stages of pregnancy must be considered and discussed and potential risks assessed to ensure the home working environment is safe and secure. Pregnancy-related illness is supported in the same way for all SQA employees regardless of their work location.</p> <p>We advise that the policy includes reference to the Maternity Leave Policy which describes the responsibility for line managers of staff who are or become pregnant to discuss their home-working arrangement ensuring a review is completed. Providing support channels in the policy is advisable also. Reference in the Maternity Leave policy includes the need for an updated formal risk assessment to be undertaken.</p> <p>Statistics from SQA workforce monitoring report 2021-2023 show that colleagues returning from a period of maternity leave is greater than 90%. <a href="https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/equalities-2023-workforce-monitoring.pdf">https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/equalities-2023-workforce-monitoring.pdf</a></p> <p>This may be due to the flexibility available to colleagues as part of SQA Maternity leave policy and the support available to those returning.</p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</b></p>

<b>Pregnancy / Maternity</b>	<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>
	<p>Homebased roles may have a positive impact for pregnant employees, for example being able to take rest breaks, attend local medical appointments especially in comparison to office-based roles that may have a significant commute..</p> <p>With more than 1 in 10 women developing a mental illness in the perinatal period, home working and a lack of social interaction with peers could exacerbate mental health. For women who return to work after a period of maternity leave, working from home may be favourable as it may reduce levels of anxiety and provide is certainty of what to expect.</p> <p>The risk to good mental health can be partly <b>mitigated</b> by risk assessment, discussion with line manager and if required HR and/or Occupational Health provider to determine best support options available.</p>
	<b>Foster good relations</b>
	<p>Working from home permanently may present less opportunities for in-person workplace interactions and may not assist in fostering good relations amongst employees generally. However with the advent of TEAMS and other video technology people can link up much easier than before and SQA provides the equipment to do this.</p> <p><b>Mitigate</b> against this by risk assessment, discussion with line manager and if required HR and/or Occupational Health provider to determine best support options available</p>

	<b>General Equality Duty</b>
<b>Care experience (where relevant)</b>	Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
	<p>We do not gather care experience information at the moment within SQA. However, there are many research studies that evidence that care experienced individuals have a greater incidence of poorer mental and physical health.</p> <p><a href="https://whatworks-https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/The-lifelong-health-and-well-being-of-care-leavers.-Nuffield-Foundation-and-UCL-policy-briefing.-Oct-2021.pdf">https://whatworks-https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/The-lifelong-health-and-well-being-of-care-leavers.-Nuffield-Foundation-and-UCL-policy-briefing.-Oct-2021.pdf</a>  <a href="https://www.csc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Care-Leavers-Emotional-Wellbeing-Pr">csc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Care-Leavers-Emotional-Wellbeing-Pr</a></p> <p><b>Conclusion: Probable neutral impact</b></p>
	<b>Advance equality of opportunity</b>
	We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly / indirectly on people who are Care Experienced and therefore make no further recommendations in this area
	<b>Foster good relations</b>
	We conclude there is no evidence to suggest that this policy may impact directly / indirectly on people who are Care Experienced and therefore make no further recommendations in this area

**Rationale**

If you are proceeding with a decision that may have a negative impact and are not putting in place actions to mitigate against this, please explain how this is objectively justified.

All identified negative impacts have mitigating actions.